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MR. DOCTOR MAN

HELEN S. WOODRUFF

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MR. DOCTOR-MAN

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MR. DOCTOR-MAN

BY

HELEN S. WOODRUFF

Author of "The Lady of the Lighthouse,"
"The Little House," etc., etc.

NEW YORK

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To the Memory of My Uncle

HON. WILLIAM B. HORNBLOWER

Whose Unfailing Interest in My Work

Was an Inspiration

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN the heart of the Sunny South there is a beautiful "Magic City," but the fate of her children will not be that of the children in this story. The untiring efforts of the wonderful women on her Children's Hospital Board have saved them from that, and assured her future citizens the opportunity for development into healthy and useful men and women.

Long live the new hospital, towards the building of which go all proceeds from this book!

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CHAPTER I

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MR. DOCTOR-MAN

CHAPTER I

DR. DEAN hung up the telephone receiver and sighed. Well, *that* mother was comforted anyway, poor little frightened soul! The culture was all right; he had been able to tell her so just then; and at the remembrance of her happy voice over the good news his eyes smiled—but almost at once clouded and he drew his brows together sharply. How much longer would the little thing, her daughter, be safe? Three cases of diphtheria in one district—and one reported from his own neighborhood—and even yet the great city which he could plainly see from his window on the Highlands,

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lapped in its valley bright with electric lights, the multiplicity of which spelt prosperity, was unconscious, or wilfully careless, of the menace within her very gates!

Was his the only heart that cared, he wondered? Were his the only eyes that saw the real danger? Surely not; and yet he knew the men and women of this town called him "an alarmist," a man who was only "happy when he was miserable about somebody"—an "old croaker!"

But in the five years he had worked among them he had seen three epidemics sweep the poor districts, carrying before them little lives that might with proper civic precaution have been spared. And so little had the Highlands really cared—for at that time they had escaped—that very few of the families had realized their extent. How wicked, how wasteful it all seemed. How unfair to

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Motherhood and the little souls who had so recently left their Maker, wanting and entitled to their chance in the world. God, he *would* win! He would keep on fighting! He would awaken this careless city of luxury to her duty; and with this idea strengthened tenfold by his recent nights of sleeplessness and the resulting fatigue, he began writing furiously. Perhaps his warnings were not read—perhaps the one paper which had hitherto helped him by printing them, with his heartfelt appeals that they be heeded, would refuse this time to give the matter any space. And yet he must try. So long as the wealthy section where he lived cared no more than it did for the poorer section, menaces would remain, coming back each year to claim their victims. And then a bitter thought, half desire, shot for a moment through his mind. If those fathers

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and mothers of wealth were made only just once to thoroughly appreciate the resulting suffering of an epidemic, as the poorer classes had been made to appreciate it so *many* times, would they not take the precaution he was daily preaching to them? Would they not band themselves together and build a children's hospital with a contagious ward —for their own protection if not for humanity's sake? A city of over one hundred thousand people, and no such institution! Then his pencil flew faster than ever. He would tell them once more, in stronger language if possible, in which direction their duty lay!

Sitting thus at his desk beneath the cold light of a green reading lamp, his features drawn and tense, he wrote on and on as the dusk deepened into twilight and the twilight into night, and the jeweled crown of

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the city grew brighter and more gay each moment. It seemed to him as his pen flew rapidly over the paper that it must be dipped in his very heart's blood, so keenly and vividly did the writing bring into being the past which rose up and passed before him in kaleidoscopic scenes, changing, ever changing, as if in a dream, each scene more terrible than the last. Ah, no wonder he was a "croaker," a crank, eternally preaching Prevention with a large P! Almost ever since he could remember all the sorrow in his life had been caused by onsets of Disease that could have been kept out by the wall of Prevention! And dropping his pencil he deliberately dwelt on those scenes of sadness that had done so much towards molding him into the man he now was—a man giving the best years of his life not only to the crying of "wolf," but to the actual

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fighting of that enemy when it came to his neighbor's door.

In his early youth scarlet fever had shut him in darkness for many months—a darkness so terrifying and seemingly endless that he had never forgotten. And later, it had been the same dread spectre that had taken his two little brothers, and left his mother, then so young and gay, a bowed sorrowful woman, old before her time.

Then the other—after he had finished his medical course and begun his practice in a small town in the Middle West. It had come like a nightmare at first, and later he had awakened to find it a reality. What a fool he had been, and yet—yet he knew in his heart that he would doubtless do over again the same thing he had done then if the possibility or need arose. Yet it had almost spoiled his life. It could have been done

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another way. Yes, there was no necessity of such headlong self-sacrifice. But when he had done it there seemed no other way. If it had happened to him now of course, in his maturer years, he would not have—

"Ting-a-ling-a-ling," the telephone bell interrupted; and whirling around in his chair he picked up the instrument, forgetting his own sorrows completely in his anxiety at this call. He was not a fashionable doctor, nor one to gain in worldly goods, and young mothers never roused him out of a warm bed to tell him their babies' feet were cold, or that they had swallowed a bite of something they hadn't chewed! So when the bell rang now he knew that it was probably an S. O. S. from some poor soul adrift on the sea of trouble somewhere on the fiery outskirts of the smoky iron and coal manufacturing city.

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"Hello. Yes? *My* district nurse?——"

"—Oh, yes! Yes, Miss Comfort," he answered the voice of a sweet-faced elderly woman he paid personally to do work for him in the poor districts.

"What? What's that?—Oh, dreadful!—Why the poor little child, I'll be right out—Of course! What?—What's that?—Got no home? Deserted, you think? Found him in a vacant shack? My God!"—and he groaned aloud as the voice at the other end of the wire kept on with its story.

"Well—let's see," he finally said as the other ceased speaking; "you say you think his family have moved and left him? Must be child of drunken parents that have been working around the foundry? And they left yesterday—Ump-hump—Well—eh—Miss Comfort, couldn't you—I hate like the dickens to ask you, but you know the neighbor-

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hood I am in—besides the lady I'm boarding with has a child of her own so I couldn't bring him here—couldn't you take him to your rooms?—Well of course if that's the case, you can't." Then his indignation getting the better of him he exclaimed hotly:

"It's the devil to pay anyhow! Outrageous! Simply assinine! A city of this size and no children's hospital or contagious ward! Nowhere to take a sick child like that! Well, I'll be right out as quick as I can get there! In the meantime keep him in the shack," and hanging up the receiver he grabbed his hat and heavy overcoat and rushed out of the door to the curb where his motor waited, thinking aloud angrily:

"And the trouble spreading, spreading, as it was bound to do!—Why people can't realize that to really protect their own children they *must* protect all children—why they

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can't realize that to make the Highlands safe they must make the poor districts safe, I simply cannot understand! There is certainly no such thing as prevention so long as selfishness and lack of helpfulness to others prevails!" And entering the car he said to the negro at the wheel:

"Bud, drive like the devil! South Street. Don't mind the speed limits!—A city like this oughtn't to be allowed limits, or anything else! Lord, the foolhardiness of such people!" and he settled himself back and gazed out towards the twinkling city below him that lay, flame-encircled, like a beautiful Brunhilda fast asleep.

Down South Street, around the winding curves of Overland Avenue and on past the Country Club, gay with music and laughter, past rows of beautiful homes surrounded by green lawns and trees that were seem-

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ingly an unbroken line of sentinels in their winter dress, the motor sped.

As they neared the heart of the city, busy now with hordes of Christmas shoppers, Dr. Dean could not but marvel inwardly at the wonder and beauty of it all. Only a very few years before, when he was a boy, he remembered having been here in Hamburg, but then he had seen only a small town, apparently like any other small town in the sunny South. And now——

He looked up at the brooding, furnace lighted smoke cloud hovering above mountains, hills, valleys and dales, all a part of her, and imagined he saw the giant Genii that had called her from the smoke and flame that marked her borders into her present beautiful being. Surely she was a magic city—a wonderful admixture of terrible flames and cooling vistas, of sun-

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kissed suburban homes and city-thronged streets. No wonder her inhabitants spoke of her with pride in their hearts, and yet—yet on her fiery outskirts, whither he was even now speeding at this "Time of Love" —just before the Christ-child's birthday, there was a little sick child, homeless, a menace to other children; and in the whole of that great city full of wealth and approaching Christmas joy there was not one single place to which it could be taken where proper care could be given it! With this the trend of his former thoughts returned, and he did not look out, but sat, head bowed, going over again every detail of his past life and the part that physical suffering and sorrow had played in it.

Once more he saw himself as a young medical student in New York City, and saw her, a young nurse, white clad, by his side.

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Golden haired, with blue eyes like a child's, she stood beside him, always ready, always helping, seeming to know intuitively his every wish and supplying it almost before he himself realized what it was, her hands ever responding to his every need as readily as did his own.

Thus for two years they had worked side by side in that place of suffering, each reading in the other's looks and gestures that which he felt he could not express in words until after he knew his future to be assured. But oh! the foolish, false pride of that silence! For had he spoken then, had he been bound to her, the other calamity would never have happened. Ah! he knew that now! Only too well he realized, too late, that she would without doubt have waited for him, waited lovingly and with encouraging faith for the time when they could have

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married. Had not her eyes said as much to him over and over again! And, after all, was what he chose then to call "honorable silence" really honorable or fair to her? Is it not always in very great part just selfish pride that every man's ego cloaks under the guise of honor? How miserable and lonely the empty years had been in spite of all he had accomplished.

And now the scene shifted and he saw himself alone, working hard at his profession in the small Western city where he had gone just after his graduation. No word had passed between them at parting, but he had felt sure then that in another year he could return and speak it, speak it so she would know and understand how hard a struggle the silence had been for him!

Then like a slowly approaching storm the rumor reached him, distant and uncertain

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at first, but growing more distinct as it came, of her supposed engagement to the head surgeon under whom they had both worked. An angry, accusing letter,—a proud, hurt response flew across the country, and then——

It was night. The winter wind howled and roared through the deserted streets of his Western home, the house shook; but all unheeding he answered a call to the poorer part of the town, glad to forget his own suffering in the possibility of helping someone else.

Alone in a small bedroom high above the parlor-boarders he found her, a poor little crumpled wreck, her dark curls streaming across the pillow, her small face drawn and white with suffering!

The hard featured "lady of the house" had sent for him, and on learning that the

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seamstress-boarder had spinal meningitis a terrible hour had ensued!

There was no hospital in the town . . . She had no relatives or friends. She could not remain in the boarding house, or so the lady of the house angrily informed him. . . . So himself angry, and having been so recently hurt, with his usual impulsiveness and a desperateness half vindictive towards the golden haired girl, he had married his little patient and taken her to his home.

Days of patient nursing, ministrations as gentle as though she had been that other one, ensued; while rumors of his mental irresponsibility, occasioned by his quixotic conduct, as judged by the town, reached the young doctor. But he was too busy, and too miserable, to care!

In bravado he had sent a heavily marked copy of his marriage announcement to New

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York, and in return had read of the well-known surgeon's sudden marriage to his pretty nurse.

Days grew into weeks, and weeks into months, and though the doctor's little patient bearing his name was no longer a placarded danger to the town, and he could come and go freely to his home, her face showed no responsive gleam at his comings or goings; for the pain had left her bereft of all personality—a gentle dark-eyed little spirit unaware of her own existence, adrift, with no rudder to guide her.

Of course the doctor's rising practice rapidly dwindled after that, until within a very short time he put the poor little thing, his wife in name only, into a comfortable Home maintained for such as she and, packing his things, had gone south to his native state, settling in the manufacturing city fast grow-

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ing famous throughout the world, hoping here to make his life really count for something after all.

"Gawd, Boss, did you see dat!" the chauffeur rudely broke in upon his thoughts. "We almost got pulled dat time, fer sho! Goodbye, Mr. Cop!" and he raced on, leaving the angry policeman far behind them. "We'se hittin' it up like de heavenly chariot!" And chuckling, he turned a sharp curve and slowing down, looked towards the doctor:

"All right, sir, here we is. What shack does you desire?" And he went very slowly over the black dirt road, on each side of which were closely clustered shanties, outlined darkly against the glare of the coke ovens and flaming furnaces beyond.

Peering anxiously out at the weird scene, seeking for some sign as to where the district nurse was waiting with her charge, Dr.

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Dean did not answer, and so the chauffeur drove on.

Every now and then they passed small knots of workmen, the flare of the furnaces lighting up their smeared faces, and each of these groups seemed to be talking earnestly together. Occasionally one or more of them would recognize the doctor's car, standing out as it did against the fiery background; and touching their slouch hats would salute him as he passed. In the crisp winter air the blast of the furnaces several blocks away could be felt, and the soft coal smoke settled down over the whole scene in a softly falling shower of soot.

Finally, after having gone some distance through this settlement, the anxious doctor espied a woman's figure far down the black dirt road standing under an arc-light, a child held tightly in her arms, and another woman

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bending above them both. Quickly giving his chauffeur a command to stay exactly where he was, Dr. Dean jumped out and strode rapidly up to them.

At the sound of his approaching footsteps the one in white, a dark cape thrown around her, turned, and her face lighted with welcome and relief.

"He's pretty sick," she said to him gently. "But I had to bring him out here, for the couple in the adjoining cabin have children —and besides I had no proper light—and he was choking so frightfully!" Then turning to the negro woman who held the child she said:

"Thank you very much, Auntie. Now I'll take him. It was awfully good and brave of you to help me." Then speaking again to the doctor she continued: "Everyone was so frightened I could not get any

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help—only excited demands that I get him out of the house—until Auntie here happened along—— And the poor little thing is choking to death, I fear! But she has held him while I removed some of the mucus from his throat, and now—there, I'll take him, Auntie——"

But before she could take him from the negro's arms a terrible paroxysm of coughing and gasping again caught the poor little sufferer. His body grew cold and rigid, then curling itself backwards over her arm he made a frantic effort to fill his stifling lungs. His eyes, wide open and horribly staring, protruded; and then finding the struggle too great, the limbs relaxed, and he lay an unconscious, pathetic heap against the woman's breast!

With lightning fingers then—for there was not a moment to lose—the doctor tore

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open the satchel he carried and in quick, but firm, tones of command gave directions to the nurse.

Obeying him she soon held an ether cone to the queerly working little face, which almost immediately grew calmer and more deadly white; and with long deft fingers the doctor plied his surgeon's knife right then and there in the light of that street lamp, and opening the soft white throat just below the dimpled chin inserted a tube.

The blue of the child's face faded as with a long convulsive whistle the air passed through the tube and entered his tortured lungs. The doctor and nurse, white and shaking now, stood watching, for this was a thing done only as the last resort, and even yet they almost dared not hope for its success.

Slowly, slowly the refreshing air did its

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work. The little fellow regained consciousness and opening his eyes tried to smile into those of the old negro woman who still held him, while the tears streamed unheeded down her cheeks.

"Marse," she said brokenly to the doctor, "dis cole night air is bad fer him—ain't it?"

The doctor bowed his head in assent and was about to answer when she continued in a glad voice:

"Den come on! Jes follow me! We-all will take him to *my* house," pointing to a dilapidated negro cabin further down the road, away from the settlement of laborers. "Dar ain't nobody dar but me, and *I* doan keer ef he is got ketchin dippentheria, I don't! Bless his little soul, it's worth ketchin somethin' to he'p sech an angel chile!" And leading the way, she soon had the little fellow safe between the snowy sheets of her

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tumbled down "bes' bed," and the doctor and nurse were keeping watch over him.

All through the night the Angel of Death seemed hovering very near, but as the sun rose up over the eastern hills to smile the shadows away the little boy slept, and Dr. Dean knew the worst was past.

"Miss Comfort," he said to his nurse, "are you sure this child was deserted by drunken parents working in the foundries?"

Miss Comfort looked at the tousled yellow curls, the small delicate features, and the exquisitely aristocratic little hands as they lay outstretched upon the bed, and shook her head.

"Oh, I'm not at all sure," she said. "I simply guessed it. That was the only way Auntie and I could account for him being here, that's all. I heard him crying as I passed last night, just before telephoning

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you—and finally located him, frightened and ill almost beyond consciousness in the empty shack just vacated by a no-count couple I knew had a son about his age. But of course he may be——"

"Miss Comfort," he said almost brusquely, whirling around and striding back to the bedside, "I think he will live. But he is too ill even yet for you to have the entire charge of him. I'll send someone to relieve you. And in the meantime, I must start a search for his parents. I'll also send down at once disinfectants from the drug store, so don't worry. After 'scrubbing up' you need not be quarantined, but can turn the case over to the other nurse and go to those cases who need you. I'll also attend to fumigating the cabin where you found him.

"And you, Auntie," stepping from the sick room into the lean-to that formed the

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kitchen of the cabin and speaking to the negro woman there, "you've been a trump!" and he put his hand on her old bent shoulder. "But you understand now that you are quarantined and must not go out, or let anyone come in here, until I tell you you may. Understand? I've got to go away for an hour or so, but Miss Comfort'll be here——"

"Yes, sah; yes, sah," the old woman curtsied. "Yes, sah, Doctor, I puffectly understands," and with a last lingering look at the beautiful boy on the bed the doctor went away.

But the good-hearted old negress, though she did realize perfectly, as she had said, that she could not go out, did *not* realize any more than did others like her who were spreading the dread trouble, that laundry for "de Quality" should be quarantined also. So summoning the drayman who al-

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ways did such delivering she soon had the various bundles of beautifully fluted and starched clothes speeding on their way to the homes on the Highlands where the little darlings of wealth lived out their sheltered existence, their mothers for the most part unmindful, or heedless, of that other part of the city now suffering, because they felt secure in the knowledge that *they* were too far removed for danger.

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CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER II

THE morning of the day on which the district nurse had found Christopher ill and forlorn in the deserted shack his pretty young mother, Gladys Clark, was sitting at her brother's breakfast table in a cheery house high up on the wooded slopes of Gray Mountain, far above the roar and soot of the busy city.

Occasionally she would raise her big blue eyes from the paper she held, and dreamily looking from the windows, flooded with the warm winter sunshine, she would gaze away, over beyond the topographical-like scene of winding home-lined streets to that very section of grinding labor and biting poverty. Sitting thus she could not help but com-

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pare her own lot with that of those other mothers less fortunate than herself; and with this thought her eyes involuntarily sought the boy's curly head bent busily over his cereal bowl as he sat by her side.

A bright fire crackled and snapped upon the hearth just back of the rich-toned mahogany table around which they sat, and with a sigh, half of sympathy for those others and full of thankfulness for herself, she let her eyes wander back from the out-door scene, and picking up the paper from her lap went on reading the article that had caused her her present mood of introspection.

How little she knew the thoughts that her own interest and words on the subject had set to work in the baby head she imagined to be so idly innocent; thoughts that had her mother-eyes been able to read would

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have turned her feeling of happy security into a frantic fear. For listening every morning, as he had, to hers and her brother's conversation her little son had determined to explore the city's smoky borders at his very first opportunity.

It must be a gloriously dangerous sort of place, way out there, he was thinking to himself, as in true boy fashion he scraped the last bit from his bowl. It must be *full* of fiery furnaces, and interesting sick children, and black smoke curling up and up and up,—so high he could see it from almost every window of his new home! Yes, he was sure he would love it there! He had said as much to his mother that very morning before breakfast; but she had met the suggestion of their going with a horrified "no"!

But *he* was five years old now!—and a great big boy! And with this newly ac-

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quired age, proclaimed only a few days before by a huge cake with five bright candles burning upon it, he decided he would go anyhow. Yes, the very first chance he got he would go!—and his eyes looked off to that alluring spot just as his mother's eyes were doing. All one had to do, he argued mentally, was to go down the winding white streets the same way his uncle did every morning. Then after he had done that he would go on past the tall buildings in the valley, so plainly seen from the window, where he knew his uncle was making bread and butter! . . . And *then* he would go on and on, out to those tall, tall chimneys that looked like Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum's giant pipes! *That* was the way to get there he was sure!! Yes, he was quite big enough to go alone.

And all unconscious of these thoughts back of her son's cherub-like expression his mother

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again commenced talking freely to her brother, paper-engrossed, at the other end of the table, both of them entirely unsuspicious of the not too innocent ears so keenly pricked for their every word.

"Jack," Mrs. Clark said wistfully, looking up from her paper, "I wish I *could* help those poor things living near the foundries. As I have often said, the children's lives can't be very joyous at best in that soot-laden air and unnatural surroundings. But I don't dare go out there! In fact these articles in the Ledger Age News have gotten on my nerves terribly. Yet I can't seem to help reading them every morning, for I realize they must be true, and that *something* ought to be done about it all. The writer says, 'Safety and Selfishness do not make good bedfellows. . . . To safeguard one's own child one must safeguard *all* children. . . .

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Every sick child is every well child's neighbor, for Diphtheria eliminates distance, as do all contagious diseases'—and he says further that there is another case out there—and—Oh, My Goodness!—one case *here* . . . on the *Highlands!*" as her eyes caught the alarming words.

"Now, Gladys," her brother interrupted, looking over his paper at her terror-bleached face, "don't you begin worrying about *that* again! There's a crank doctor in this town named Dean that's always writing that stuff and alarming everybody, but we've been without a contagious ward or a children's hospital either for a good many years, and I guess we can go on a little longer——"

"But every town does need them both," Mrs. Clark broke in, swallowing hard to regain her self-control. "And when I wrote asking you about everything in connection

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with Christopher's and my coming here to live with you I forgot——"

"Yes, thank the Lord, you forgot to ask about that!" he exclaimed, his eyes twinkling. "Why, Sis, if you had asked me any more questions as to the safety of the Heir-Apparent's health in this burg I think I would have had to send the whole town up to New York 'on approval' before you'd have consented to come!" and he grinned his broad good-natured grin at her.

But Mrs. Clark, again entirely engrossed in her paper, seemed not to have heard him, and in a moment more she went on:

"Well, dear, of course if you're really absolutely sure there is no danger of those foundry children coming over here, or Christopher's coming in contact with the germs——"

But she stopped short, for her brother

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was holding up both hands at her in mock pleading—she had been over this very same ground so often of late—and his eyes were brimming with merriment.

"'How doth the busy little germ
Improve each shining hour,'"

he quoted. Then seeing her real distress his face sobered and he reassured her seriously as usual.

"Of course there's no danger, Gladys. I would not have let you come here if there had been. As I've told you before that part of the town is miles away——"

"Yes, but that isn't the only part of Hamburg where you've had and are having contagious diseases—judging from these articles" . . .

"Those articles be hanged," her brother broke in impatiently. "Even the reported

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Highlands case is blocks away from *us!* I tell you the man's a crank. Don't worry so much——"

"I don't worry much," his sister defended herself quickly. "But—but Jack, you must remember that he's all I've got now," looking at the busy curly head, "and—and my hospital training . . . Well, dear, I just can't *help* feeling a little bit like this writer does! He says: 'We are all neighbors. To protect oneself others have to be protected!' Of course I want to stay here with you," and getting up she went around and perched herself upon his chair-arm affectionately. "You know I do. I *love* living here in your house, but I do want Christopher to be safe!"

"Safe!" her brother again grinned good-naturedly; "I never saw a safer *looking* specimen—did you?" and the boy, having at last succeeded in thoroughly polishing his

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oat meal bowl, jumped up and in imitation of his mother solemnly clambered on the other arm of his uncle's chair, his mind still busy with that forbidden journey, though his face showed nothing save baby innocence and charming vacancy of thought. Thus the three of them sat for several moments, until finally the man shifted his position, and looking at his watch, took his sister's small, piquant face in his hands and kissed her.

"I must go now, Gladys. And don't you worry! It's bully having you here—simply bully!" Then to the child:

"Good-bye, old man. Don't get into any more mischief than you can help. So long!" And getting up he swung out of the room, down the front steps, and jumped into his runabout, while Mrs. Clark hurried to the back of the house to attend to the housekeeping duties of her brother's establishment.

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Down the drive the little fellow trotted, as was his daily habit, and standing at the entrance of the driveway watched his uncle's car go speeding down the steep, winding street towards that Smoke Region that had taken such a strong hold upon his childish imagination.

"I dess dess I'll go *now!*" he said to himself with only a fleeting glance of uneasiness towards the house. And suiting the action to the words he was soon trotting on out through the stone gateway and briskly down the hill as fast as his fat little legs could carry him. Very quickly he found with a feeling of relief that he was out of calling distance, and thus reassured and feeling particularly independent, he slackened his pace and looked about him with eager interest.

"I likes 'sploring," he said briefly to himself. Then in self-explanation of the wan-

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der-lust that was bubbling up in him for the first time, he remarked further: "I'm five years old, so course I do!" And crossing the street he went on, his eyes fastened joyfully upon the distant view of the smoke-wreathed, flame-encircled Mecca of his dreams, until getting further down the steep street this alluring view was lost to him behind the houses, and suddenly bereft of the ambition that it had always inspired in him, he began to realize that he was tired and that his shoes were really very heavy! The crisp winter air bit at his bare hands and blew his curls about annoyingly, and looking back he wondered with his very first pang how far away his mother was.

"But I'm five years old!" he repeated to spur his lagging interest; "I *want* to go." And trudging forward he determined he would accomplish what he had undertaken.

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His shoes grew more and more heavy, however, and made his feet fairly drag; and old Jack Frost seemed now to be nipping at his face as well as his hands. A funny "stomachache-feel," like that which came when his mother scolded him, rose up in his throat, and he kept looking backward, almost wishing he had not come.

"But I'm five years old!" he repeated to himself, "and I *want* to go!" And he dragged himself manfully on.

Finally, just ahead of him at the curb of the sidewalk, he saw a small, bright red wagon, piled high with white bundles, and seated on the seat, his hands holding the reins, was a big-eyed black boy hardly larger than himself, and to this gorgeous well equipped equipage there was fastened the most beautiful mottled black and mud-colored billy-goat he had ever seen in his whole

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long life! The sight of it and its driver aroused Christopher as nothing else could have done and, forgetting his fatigue, he ran forward eagerly. Stepping from the sidewalk just in front of where the goat had drawn himself up for a few moments of willful rest, Christopher addressed the little darky.

"Is him yours?" he asked, pointing excitedly to the balking goat with both his chubby forefingers.

The driver grinned and bowed a proud assent.

Little Christopher stepped closer. He and the goat exchanged serious wide-eyed stares, then turning to the black boy again, he stated solemnly and with all due dignity:

"I wants him . . . I'll give you two nickels, and three pennies, and a dime for him!" And running his hand into the side

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pocket of his blouse to assure himself that his store of coin was there he stood watching for the impression that he felt certain this huge offer would make upon the other boy.

But continuing to grin, the little darky emphatically shook his head.

Christopher stuck one puzzled finger in his mouth at the unexpected refusal and regarded the goat with renewed awe and admiration, while the latter continued to return the compliment unblinkingly. The sum he had so recklessly offered constituted his entire worldly goods, and he had certainly thought it more than generous; but the other boy, shrewd for one of his years and by inheritance a gilt-edged mule trader, was quick to realize that he could take advantage of him.

"He's wo'th a-million-dollars mo' dan dat," he stated, and sloughing from the

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wagon he went around to his steed's head to show off his paces, as it were.

"See dat off eye?" he said proudly. "It's blind. A fire cracker 'sploded in it!"

Little Christopher stuck his face very close into that of the goat's and gazed at the injured orb admiringly.

"And look here at dat sink in his lef' side," his owner continued. "A awmobile runned over him dar and smasheded three ribs and a half!"

Christopher was duly impressed, but the black boy not yet content continued:

"And see dat southeast hind leg? It's broke right in two. Dat's why he walks so pretty," pointing to a leg still useful, but warped and rather the worse for wear. "Ma kicked him dar de last time she wuz drunk!" he stated proudly. "An' you see he ain't got no tail atall, not even a stump! A tin

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can he didn't eat done dat! An' sometimes —like now—he's so mulish and goat-haided he won't even go——"

But there was no use to tabulate William's cultivated attractions further, for the other child, eager for the possession of the prize at the very first glance, was, now that these added charms had been pointed out to him, coveteous almost beyond the bearing.

"Well, then I dess I'll dess give you all that money dess to drive 'hind him out to *there,*" he said, pointing to the smoke of the furnaces he could again see and suddenly remembering the real reason for his being so far away from home. "I *can* drive 'hind him right-now-this-very-second out to there —tan't I?" he asked in a wistful, almost pleading, tone.

The black boy stood in a brown study for

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a moment, seeming to weigh the mighty question, then holding his outstretched pale palm towards the other, said slowly: "Let's see the chink fust!"

Christopher's dimpled fingers scrambled deep in his pocket for a moment and, his face beaming, produced the coins, eagerly pouring them into the other's hand.

The older boy looked them over carefully, spat twice upon them, then rubbed them in the dirt at his feet.

"Is you sure dey ain't hoo-dooed?" he asked anxiously, in spite of the precaution he had just taken. " 'Cause we doan want no hoodoo money in *our* fambly!"

Christopher looked puzzled a moment, for in his northern training he had never come in contact with the dreadful element of hoodooism. Then he said with the dignity any gentleman would have used if his check was

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being questioned: "No, of course they isn't! They's dess real moneys my Gladys-Mamma gave me."

This seemed to satisfy the darky, and putting the coins in his cheek, an ever-ready and safe pocketbook, he motioned the other to climb up on the wagon seat.

Down, down the steep streets the goat shamblingly ambled, then coming to the more level streets of the valley they skirted the crowded business portion of Hamburg and Christopher found himself driving, at the pickaninny's direction, far out along a black dirt road on either side of which were clustering shanties, and beyond them the furnaces glowing, sending out their huge "runs" of molten metal.

The sight seemed wonderful and beautiful indeed to the eyes of the imaginative New York child who had led such a well

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guarded, uneventful life, and forgetting the goat in his interest at this realization of his journey's end he stood up on the seat, his big blue eyes wide with wonder.

The little negro watched him. The sum of money he had collected seemed a large one, even to *his* avaricious dark soul, but the actual words of the bargain returned to him now, and with the cunning of a long line of male ancestors who had sometimes found it rather difficult to get along without working, he realized that he could doubtless extort more.

"Who-a-," he said to the goat, grabbing the reins away from the driver and sawing them vigorously back and forth through the seemingly iron-lined jaws. Then turning to Christopher he commanded:

"Git out. De ride's over."

Still gazing spellbound at the fiery mass

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of pouring metal, licking flames, and curling smoke that were belching from the furnaces, the little fellow obeyed silently without a suspicion of the other's guile; and whipping up his steed the embryo hold-up man drove off with a sudden spurt.

For a moment little Christopher was unable to take in the situation; then, an intuitive wave of self-preservation possessing him, he ran after the other, calling wildly for him to stop.

For several moments the pickaninny was apparently deaf, thoroughly enjoying the tortured alarm that could be so plainly detected in the calling voice.

Then he slowed down and looked back.

"Well," he said, with impudent assurance, "what you want?"

The other ran on towards him, panting; but as he neared the wagon its owner

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whipped up the goat again and left him far behind.

He stopped, puzzled, and decidedly alarmed. "I wants to go back to Uncle's," he called after him.

This was exactly what the negro wanted him to want, so stopping a safe distance away he hollered: "Den cough up three mo' pennies and a dime and a nickel!"

The other heard him with astonishment. "But I tan't," he stated. "You've got my moneys."

"Aw, that wuz jes fer *bringin'* you here," he answered. "You'se got to pay me dat much agin to take yer back!"

Surely this was undue extortion, and the keen Yankee mind behind those guileless baby-blue eyes took in the situation at once, and righteous anger welled up in Christopher's soul.

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"I won't pay you nothin' for taking me back!" he announced with hauteur. "I'll dess walk!" and whirling on his heel he marched off, his proud little head held high.

The big-eyed black boy looked astonished for a moment, then recognizing the white boy's master-mind, said persuasively:

"Aw, I wuz jes foolin'! Git in, little Boss. I'll take you home." But his shrewdness again coming uppermost and getting the better of his racial humbleness he remarked further: "You can pay me when you git's dar!"

Christopher hesitated just a moment, glancing towards the Highlands, blue and hazy in the distance, then, looking at his companion, shook his head.

His pride had been touched, for he felt the other boy had unduly insulted his dignity; and for the first time realizing the gulf

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that lay between them he decided to assert that dignity and stand upon his own feet, so to speak. He did not in the least understand or appreciate this feeling. Neither did he know that it was the pride inherited from his mother; but turning away he said with high-bred courteous firmness:

"No, I dess dess I'll walk, thank you—that is, when I gets fru looking! I likes looking right now!"

The little darky hung around hopefully for quite awhile longer, but simply did not exist for the new-found and confident ego of Christopher Clark! That young gentleman was slowly walking farther and farther away, around curves and angles in the road, oftentimes doubling on his tracks and thus unconsciously going over the same ground he had already traversed in the maze of this foundry settlement. But all the time he

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was glorying in his independence and in the sensation that the strange scenes about him evoked.

Finally, after many dark, half muttered threats about "little boys gittin' lost and the goblins gittin' 'em," the puzzled pickaninny and his indifferent goat had stopped following the little explorer and shambled off in another direction, leaving him to take care of himself.

The winter wind was cold and raw in spite of the sunshine.

The black road, with its tributaries, and outlets, and curves, shanty-lined everywhere, looked deserted and forlorn; and as the day lengthened and no food passed his now quivering and feverish little lips, Christopher's adventures began to grow less interesting, and his head drooped in spite of his pride and independence.

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"I dess dess I needs my nap," he said wearily to himself. "After that I'll go home and tell Gladys-Mamma all 'bout it." So wandering on he looked hopefully for a comfortable place in which to take that generally despised rest.

It seemed endless hours that he had been walking about the settlement, in which time the falling soot with the aid of his own inquisitive fingers had transformed him from an immaculate child of luxury into a gamin of the streets, and now, heavy eyed and smutty, and having come to a shack the door of which stood invitingly open, he decided to go in.

Slowly dragging one little foot after the other he climbed up the low, ramshackly steps, and entering, gazed about him for a moment. Then he sighed with relief, for in the far corner of its one room he discovered

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a bundle of rags and straw that had doubtless passed at one time for a bed. The sight of this gladdened his heart, and down upon it he cast his weary body without so much as a second thought, while two big tears he had been trying so hard to keep back escaped and washed their streaky little white way down his blackened cheeks. The discomfort he had felt in his throat that morning had become far worse than a "stomachache-feel" now, and he wished desperately that he had not come.

But true to his world-old habit the Sandman, a faithful friend to all little children everywhere, did not wait for the summons of Night, but seeing the poor little fellow's distress, quickly touched his eyelids, and he slept, snuggling further and further down in the filthy, infected rags about him, only half conscious of the growing chokey pain.

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Thus it was that after hours of feverish sleep, hours in which the diphtheria germs got in their deadly work, Miss Comfort found him and sent in her S. O. S. call to her kindly doctor sitting at his desk in his room on the Highlands.

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CHAPTER III

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DR. DEAN'S motor rapidly threaded its way out from the foundry settlement, paused at the first drug store he came to only long enough for him to get his usual "scrub up" after his visit to the infected district, and then went speeding on towards Hamburg's Police Headquarters, located in the heart of the busy city.

He sat very silent and still, his finely shaped head bowed upon his breast thinking of the poor little sufferer he had just left. Who could he be? he wondered. He felt certain he belonged elsewhere than the place in which Miss Comfort had found him. And, too, there was something strangely, hauntingly familiar about him! Yet try as

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he would the doctor could not for the life of him think where, or when, he had ever seen the exquisite baby face before.

Was it the clinging sun-kissed curls that reminded him of that other golden head, he wondered? Was it the child's big blue eyes that brought back memories of——

Pshaw! what a fool, what an awful fool he was! How silly of him to even recall all that again. It was out of his life now—done with forever! And with his usual impatience at any sentimentality on his part he scowled and tried to banish all thought of the child from his mind. Yet he *must* find its parents, he remembered, sympathy for them rising in his heart. How worried they must be. And once more the little white face with its pathetic appeal of suffering seemed to come before him, spurring him on.

"Hurry up, Bud," he said to the chauffeur.

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"This isn't a nigger funeral. Git! I'm in a hurry. What's the matter anyhow?" as the car suddenly shook itself, choked, spat, then slowed down and began a sidelong, balking, sort of hesitation waltz backwards down the hill.

The chauffeur's dark face clouded with quick impatience for a moment at this performance, and then cleared, leaving his good-natured grin wider than ever as he threw on the brakes and stopped the car.

"Law, Boss, dar ain't nothin' de matter wid dis Ford 'ceptin' *con*trariness. All cars is automobillygoats in dat respect," and he cluckled. "Dat's howcome I named dis here one 'Perhaps.' Dey all oughter be named dat, kaze *perhaps* dey will and *perhaps* dey won't—jes' accordin' to how dey feels!" and continuing to chuckle he climbed out and went around in front of the car.

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"Whoa-a- dar, ole gal," he said, taking hold of the crank with both hands as the car showed signs of renewed balking. "Whoa-a-a! no more skid-scamperin' fer *you!* When I git yer coffee-grinder ground up youse got to *go!—go* like a sinner when the Debil is runnin' him! Yer hear? Boss is in a hurry," continuing to talk to it as though it were alive. . . . "But dar! Here —we—goes!!" And having succeeded in getting up power again, he clambered back into the car, grasped the steering-wheel firmly and shot up the long black hill like a streak!

Up one hill and down another, around the corners whizzing and rattling and bumping, they sped, the negro now ziz-zagging skilfully in and out along the streets still crowded with Christmas shoppers, keeping up a running fire of remarks to the car the

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while, until finally he pulled up with an exhilarating jerk in front of the city's home for Blue-Coats, and announced nonchalantly:

"Right here, Boss! Dar ain't nothin' de matter wid dis car! No sar! Nor nothin' slow about me neither! If you pay de fines I'll enjoy myself ev'y time, I will! Yes, *sah!*" and jumping out he opened the door with a flourish, looking about with self-satisfied pride in hopes there were other negroes watching who would be duly impressed by his skill and speedy driving.

Half-smiling, but without answering the darky, Dr. Dean got out and hurried up the steps of the brightly lighted police building. Surely here he would find some trace of the child's identity, for his loss must certainly have been reported by now.

Suddenly he felt a jerk at his sleeve, and wheeling around saw his comical chauffeur

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grinning apologetically and holding a letter towards him.

"Boss," he said, "I clean forgot dis. De postman give it to me dis mornin'."

The doctor paused only long enough to take the proffered envelope, glance at it, then thrust it into his pocket unopened.

"That's all right, Bud," he said, and strode on.

The letter bore the printed name of the Home where his little wife-patient was. It was a bill, no doubt. That was all there ever was; for she, of course, was incapable of writing. So dismissing the whole incident he passed on through the door of the building and was about to enter the main room when a man and woman passed him. Something in her frightened, pathetic clinging to the man's arm suddenly attracted his attention, and getting a view of her small delicate pro-

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file through her heavy veil, sharply defined against the dark of the hall's door-way, he started violently, then frowned. What was the matter with him to-day, anyway? he asked himself impatiently. He was certainly getting morbidly sentimental! And striding on into the main room of the building he addressed a uniformed Sergeant-in-Charge who sat writing at his tall desk. Greeting him with a friendly nod, the Sergeant listened sympathetically while he explained his errand, reporting the finding of an evidently lost child and its present ill condition.

Then the Sergeant smiled encouragingly. "There was a lady and gent in here just now for the twentieth time looking for that very kid, I reckon, Doctor," he said. "Let's see, the name was—was——" and he turned to his pad as a reminder.

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The doctor waited almost breathlessly. Somehow this little fellow had taken a great hold on his heart strings. He could even now see his big pleading eyes full of patient suffering——

"The name was—Woods," the Sergeant said, finding the memorandum on his pad. "Mr. Woods, you know, of the firm of 'Woods & Woods.' Has just built one of the swellest houses on Gray Mountain. Brought his money down to these parts from old New York a few years ago just to help 'boom the poor South,'" and he laughed. "But I reckon the 'poor South' has put a good many perfectly good eagles in his Yankee pocket, all right, all right!"

"But the boy," the doctor broke in impatiently. "What did he say about him? How did he get lost? Wasn't he terribly worried?"

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"Oh, yes, he was worried all right," the Sergeant replied. "But the kid's mother! Law*dee!* I thought *she'd* have a tantrum right here, she was that excited! And if there's anything I do hate, Doctor, it's to see a pretty blue-eyed young critter like her a'*crying*. Why, the very way she *looked* at me—pleading like her heart was broke—for me to find her 'little Christopher' *got me* through and through! I just naturally promised her to find the kid in about five minutes' time!" and the big, kind-hearted, rough fellow grinned sheepishly at the remembrance of the way he had soothingly reassured little Mrs. Clark.

"Well, give me Mr. Woods's telephone number," the doctor demanded, picking up the instrument from the Sergeant's desk. "I'll notify them of the little boy's whereabouts and condition at once."

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So calling the house that fright and anxiety was overshadowing, the doctor told Mr. Woods the story of his discovery of Christopher and of his present critical illness. Arrangements were quickly made for Mr. Woods and his limousine to go to the shanty where the boy was, and accompanied by the doctor and his district nurse the little boy was soon speeding towards his uncle's house where an immaculate and sun-flooded "contagious ward" had been improvised from his and his mother's rooms; and where she awaited him with tearful eyes but a heart full of thankfulness that he had thus been safely returned to her.

. . . . . .

Pure and bright and crystal clear the Christ Child's birthday dawned above the brooding mountains of the Magic City, and her wreathing smoke from tall industrial

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chimneys was wafted upward into the rosiness of the winter morning. Soon becoming a misty, floating veil in the clear air, it was illumined by the sun smiling through it and hung, a Christmas halo, seeming to promise "Peace on Earth, Good Will towards Men." Far away a set of silvery Christmas chimes sang softly of the Saviour's birth; and over all her hills and valleys there seemed also to descend a soothing prophecy of happiness-to-come, as one lone star still shone faintly above the rising sun in the East.

Opening his eyes at the sound of the chiming bells Dr. Dean lay motionless for a moment looking out upon this picture; and then almost unconsciously feeling the Spirit of Eternal Love that pervaded the Yuletide world, a wan smile of hope suddenly kindled in his tired eyes.

"Surely this is the end of it," he mur-

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mured. "The end of needless suffering for Hamburg," and going over the crowded events and tragedies that had followed his discovery of little Christopher he marveled in the light of his present mood that they ever could have been. And his own words returning to him he said them aloud in explanation.

"Safety and selfishness do not make good bedfellows. To safeguard one's own one must safeguard all others. Diphtheria eliminates distance—as do all contagious diseases, for every sick child is every well child's neighbor——"

How true, how terribly true these words had been proven, and lying thus he again went over every detail of the past dreadful weeks—weeks of nights turned into days, and days seemingly into years for him as he had worked frantically to stem the epidemic

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that with Christopher's illness and sojourn in the kindly negro's cabin had begun to sweep over the great city like a tidal wave, making the mothers of the Highlands and the mothers of the Foundries one in suffering; until finally reaching its highwater mark it had receded, leaving only himself, now free of germs but temporarily made "a useless heap" from a heart complication, slowly convalescing in his own bright room.

"Good morning, Doctor," a pleasant voice broke in upon his thoughts, "a happy Christmas to you!" and Miss Comfort, the bright-faced nurse, came in at his bedroom door and starchily rustled up to his bedside. "All comfy? How's the pulse this morning?" and putting her long cool fingers on his wrist she smiled at him cheerily.

He returned the smile and pointed out of the window.

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"Hopeful," he said, "like that view. The people surely will give the children a chance now—since *this*—don't you think so, Miss Comfort?" and he looked at her earnestly, for always, all through the trying weeks of self-sacrificing work, and those of his own resulting suffering, his dream, the ideal towards which he had been working for five years, had never for one moment left his mind.

Hamburg *must* have a Children's Hospital!

The nurse's face beamed, and leaning forward as eagerly as a child she slipped a big bright red envelope, tied with holly ribbon, into his hand, then stepped back and watched his face closely.

"A 'Santy Claus' for me, eh?" he said whimsically; and smiled at her eager manner. "Thank you, Miss Comfort. You're

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the most unfailingly thoughtful person I ever knew!" and he began to untie the ribbon, thinking to find some gift from her who had helped him so constantly all through the years of his charity practice.

"Oh, don't thank *me,*" she said, coloring at his praise. "That's from——"

But as she spoke the doctor unfolded a long sheet of paper, upon which were written only a very few lines.

For a moment he seemed unable to read it in his surprise, and sat looking at the paper stupidly. Then suddenly taking in its import the tears sprang to his eyes, and reaching out he grasped the nurse's sympathetic hand.

"Miss Comfort!" he exclaimed excitedly, "Miss Comfort!"

"Yes, I know," she said, tears springing to her eyes, too.

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"Thank God!" he breathed fervently, and turning the paper so that the light would fall full upon it he read its contents aloud in a voice shaking with emotion.

"TO

DAVID DEAN, M.D.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

December 24th, 1915.

"We, the undersigned, this day have deposited in the Hamburg National Bank One Hundred Thousand Dollars, which amount shall be used to build, equip, and run a

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

the site, architecture, and equipment of which shall be entirely in the hands of

DR. DAVID DEAN

and those whom he may personally choose as a Committee, or Committees, to help him.

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When completed this building, or buildings, shall bear his name in recognition of his self-sacrificing work among our children.

GRATEFUL MOTHERS OF HAMBURG.

Signed....."

And then there followed a long list of written names, at the top of which stood out in its dainty boldness the signature of *Gladys Clark.*

The nurse tiptoed away and stood gazing down, dim-eyed, at the awakening city, while the rejoicing doctor, the precious document clasped tightly in his hand, lay and gazed out from his window too, seeming to see his hospital already built—and dreaming forbidden day-dreams.

Impatiently he put those from him. That was all over and done with forever!

And then for the first time since the night

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he had discovered little Christopher the remembrance of a scene in which his black chauffeur was handing him a letter with the "Home" name printed on its corner flashed before his mind's eye.

It was Christmas—the poor little dark-haired thing bearing his name didn't know it, of course; but well,—he guessed he would not shun the thought of her on such a happy day for him! Poor child, none of it had been *her* fault—he'd send the check at once—and an extra one for some small luxury, even though she could not appreciate such a thing.

"Miss Comfort," he said, "please look in the left-hand pocket of my grey coat and get a letter—an unopened one," and he watched her as she obeyed.

"Open it, please," he requested.—"Is it a bill?"

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"No, doctor," she said, "a letter signed—" and looking to the next page for the signature she saw a word that startled her.

"It's signed 'William Brown, Physician in Charge,' Dr. Dean," she said, "but—but I think—I think *you'd* better not see this letter——"

"Give it to me!" Dr. Dean demanded with a sudden feeling of alarm.

The nurse hesitated a moment, instinctively started to obey, then attempted to draw the letter back.

But he was too quick for her, and reaching out took it from her almost roughly. His eyes hurried over its contents, and she was alarmed at his sudden pallor.

"Are you all right, Doctor?" she asked, quickly placing her fingers on his pulse.

He turned his head away and lay very still without answering.

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"Please speak," she said. "Doctor!—Dr. Dean!"

Slowly his head turned back and his hollow dark eyes looked into hers. She was still more startled by their expression.

"Are you all right?" she asked again.

The doctor moved slightly, then for the first time noticing her look of alarm he hastened to reassure her. "Yes, oh yes, I'm—all right. Don't worry—Miss Comfort. Just—just——"

And then his voice gaining in volume until she was even more startled than before by his evident excitement, he said:

"Get my clothes! Quick! Quick, Miss Comfort! I'm going to sit up—I'm going to——"

"But, Doctor," she remonstrated, laying her hand soothingly on his and trying to think how best to calm and dissuade him.

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"Get my clothes, I say!" he thundered in a way she had never heard him speak before. "I'm going to sit up, I tell you, *now—now!!* And, Miss Comfort," as she meekly brought his clothes to the bedside, "call up Mrs. Clark! I'm well, I tell you! Call up Mrs. Clark! I must see her at once!!" and waving the nurse away he sat up and began hurriedly dressing.

"Drat it!" he suddenly said, stopping in dizzy annoyance at his weakness, "drat it! I—I——

"Here you, Miss Comfort," he called sharply.—"Strychnine.—Hypo!" and he collapsed back upon his pillow.

. . . . . .

A few hours later Miss Comfort, accompanied by a Christmas visitor, tapped gently at the determined doctor's room where he was sitting bolstered up in a big Morris-

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chair near the window, his back turned inhospitably towards the door.

"Come in," a sweet feminine voice answered in chorus with his,—and little Mrs. Clark moved away, crossing over to the opposite side of the window and standing there demurely, her cheeks glowing, her loosened curls caressing her small, piquant face.

Dr. Dean sat very erect and strong in his chair. His big dark eyes were illumined, but being otherwise engaged did not turn towards the door as it opened; and so when two small hands were suddenly clapped over them he started with surprise.

"Dess dess who this is, Mr. Doctor-Man," a happy childish voice rippled. Then unable to keep the secret longer, little Christopher jumped around in front of the doctor's chair and threw his arms about his neck.

"Did you think it was Santy Claus?" he

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asked, drawing away and regarding the man seriously.

Dr. Dean did not answer, but looked instead towards the boy's mother, who stepped forward smiling and put her hand on his little curly head.

"Bad boy!" she said. "You ought not to have jumped at the 'Doctor-Man' like that. You might have hurt him. He has been very sick, you know——"

"Yes, I knows," her son said gravely, regarding Dr. Dean with sympathetic eyes. "That's why I love him so. I'se feeled a stomachache-feel of sorry for him right inside of me here," he said, putting his hand on his chest, "and I loves him since he got me well—don't you, Gladys-Mamma? You *said* you did!"

"Yes, I love him, dear," Mrs. Clark answered bravely. "But run along now and

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play. You promised if I let you come you would stay downstairs like a good boy——"

Christopher's mouth drooped at the thought of returning below. "Yes, yes, I know I did," he said excitedly. "But now I wants to give Mr. Doctor-Man his Christmas present!"

"All right, Little Man," Dr. Dean said, and reaching out drew the little fellow to him. "What have you got for me?"

The child hesitated for a moment, then snuggling himself in between the doctor's knees looked up into his eyes and said earnestly:

"You'll never, never dess," and then putting his arm about the Doctor's neck he whispered audibly: "Cause—it's my *Mamma!*" And drawing back he watched to see the effect upon the doctor.

Mrs. Clark gasped with surprise at this

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remarkable statement of her small son's, but Dr. Dean drew him closer, waiting for an explanation of the gift that he felt sure would come.

He was not disappointed, for presently the little fellow went on:

"You see, Tommy I plays with says God gave him a brother for Christmas cause he's sick wif a broke leg. So I dess dessed I'd give you a *Mamma!*"

Tears sprang to David Dean's eyes at these sweet words from the child's lips; and gathering him up upon his lap he held out his arms towards the smiling little woman by his side.

Kneeling down, she came into them, and putting one hand on her son's cheek and one on the man's, drew them against each of her own.

"And do *you* know what Gladys-Mamma

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is going to give little Christopher for *his* Christmas present?" she asked, turning to kiss the child.

"No. What?" he asked eagerly.

But kissing him right on the tip-end of his puggy little nose his mother and the doctor laughed gaily; and then looking deep into each other's eyes, told him he would *simply have to guess!!*

THE END

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